

**Submission
No 81**

MEASURES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG- RELATED VIOLENCE

Name: Mr Ivan Chohey
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Dear Sir or Madam

INQUIRY INTO MEASURES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG RELATED VIOLENCE

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

As a young member of Sydney community, I often find myself enjoying Sydney nightlife which is unfortunately heading towards non-existence, because of actions of a handful individuals. Public outrage was inevitable, and it is understandable that NSW government was cornered into making quick decision to reduce the level of violence associated with CBD (particularly Kings Cross) area.

The level of violence has in fact dropped, at least according to an absence of tragic incidents being on a front page of national newspapers and more police efforts directed towards patrolling the streets.

I believe, however, that what is happening here is merely a relief of 'symptoms', not a treatment of an actual illness. Please read below.

My friends and I decided to go to Kings Cross sometime 2 weeks ago.

As our cab pulled over next to the World Bar, we were unfortunate enough to witness a full on confrontation between potential patrons and the venue's security crew. It deeply saddened me and almost ruined the night for me as well as for my companions. I witnessed innocent bystanders suffer from collateral damage from an act of aggression (young men and women being pushed and punched) just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was only 11:30 pm. As we were refused entry into Hugo's due to us not being accompanied by any females, some 40 minutes of freezing temperature outside later we've stopped by another smaller venue where we had a few drinks and decided to visit Soho bar.

We were refused entry at Soho because it was already shutdown time of 1:30 am. Since we were left with no other option but to go home, we walked toward the taxi zone. Again, I could not believe what I am seeing as we stumbled upon another violent confrontation, this time involving two female teenagers bashing each other to blood. The least fortunate girl was barely recognizable covered in blood and bruises.

We would have hoped for this madness to stop but we were forced to witness yet another confrontation 5 minutes later in the Taxi area where two young men started a fight for the reasons unknown. This was all one night - 2 hours in the Kings Cross.

In all my 6 years in Australia, I have never felt so unsafe being on the streets; and make no mistake, I was a regular Kings Cross visitor. It does not matter what time venues shut down. Person who initially suggested that early shut down would somehow fix the problem, with all due respect, should get his/her common sense checked. Younger, naturally more aggressive visitors, being locked out of venues simply transfer the violent behaviour on the streets pushing disturbance into the suburbs.

I believe actions need to be taken to get to the root of the problem. Perhaps more effort directed towards battling steroid and other drug abuse as well as generally promoting a decent nightlife culture would be a good start.

However, measures currently in place have put me as well as thousands of others off the Kings Cross destroying Sydney's nightlife and tourism, without actually doing any good.

I trust this issue will be given a closer consideration and dealt with reasonably.

Best Regards